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John Wheeler

## Washington Confuses Syndicate Chief

CPYRGHT

## Editors Query Him On Election Outcome

Continuing the memoirs of a traveling salesman, I visited all the newspapers in Washington to try to peddle features, but most of the editors wanted to ask me what I thought about the outcome of the election. Talk about carrying coals to Newcastle when these experts seek the opinion of a bystander like me. Everybody believed it was going to be very close with the general a little ahead at this time. Between forecasts, I managed to sell some of my wares and sign a few contracts.

Mr. and Mrs. Cord Meyer invited me to dinner in their home in Virginia, and he agreed to pick me up at the National Press Building at 6. I stood at the curb waiting, and it struck me the traffic was about as heavy and confused as some of the official thinking in the capital. He now works for the Central Intelligence Agency and made a remarkable record in the war being very badly wounded in the Pacific. His twin brother, Quentin, was killed. His wife was Mary Pinchot, the daughter of Amos, and half sister of Rosamond.

"If it is a fair question, what sort of work do you do now?" I asked him as we were riding along.

"I am sorry I can't tell you," he answered, so that closed the matter.

It was a pleasant evening getting the views of youth on the political and world situations. I found myself frequently in disagreement with them, but they seemed to face the future with confidence and unafraid

which is more than a lot of us old timers do.

When I arrived in Atlanta, I was shocked to read Bobby Jones had had a heart attack. He is an old friend who, in my opinion, wrote the most intelligent series of instructive articles for the Bell Syndicate ever published. He insisted on doing it all himself, turning them out in long hand and not leaning on a ghost.

"How did it happen?" I asked George Biggers, president of the Atlanta Journal.

"He was on his way to the hospital for a check up to see what was causing new pains. He has been suffering from old ones for years since the disc operation. I hear he's pretty sick."

Later I called Mrs. Jones, and she was worried but encouraging.

"He can't see anybody," she said in reply to a question, "but he is better today."

That night some friends of mine invited me to go to the opera, but I declined politely, and I am sure Emily Post would have approved my manners. This reminds me of the wife of a pal of mine who cannot refuse when someone calls to ask her to attend a function, although she knows at the time she doesn't want to go. She always accepts and then sends a telegram explaining she has been taken sick or slipped and fallen down an open manhole or something which helps Western Union out. It reminds me of

years ago Ring Lardner, who was then living in Chicago, was visiting New York, and my wife and I asked him to have dinner with us.

"I can't," he said. "I have an engagement to meet the artist who illustrates my stories for the Saturday Evening Post. Mr. Lorimer thinks he would do better work if he got acquainted with me."

We had another cocktail or two and I began to suggest conventional excuses. Mr. Lardner shook his head no, sadly and silently. Finally he jumped up and started for the telephone.

"What did you do?" I asked when he returned.

"Oh, I called and said I had already met an artist today and didn't need to see him until tomorrow."

The trip home by Eastern Airlines was pleasant, although I spilled some sauce on my blue trousers when the plane gave a lurch. May be I'll sue. I sat next to C. E. Woolman, president of Delta Airlines, a nice guy and an old-time pilot.

"How much do these meals cost the companies?" I asked him.

"About two dollars each—some as much as two-forty," he answered.

"Why do you give away so many?"

"Competition and to please the passengers. With these fast ships we fly now, our stewards practically have to run to serve them between Atlanta and Tampa."

We pulled up at Idlewild Airport on time, and now I am back in the same old rut.

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